

## NASSAR SENTENCING

The breadth and ripple of the defendant's abuse and destruction is nearly infinite....it centers in the Lansing and MSU communities, spans the State of Michigan, and reaches club and elite training gyms, college athletics, and even the US and international Olympic communities. It's not even limited to gymnastics, as athletes from over a dozen different sports have reported abuse. His practiced and perfected abuse spanned over 25 years and included countless victims, beginning before he was a doctor, one who traveled the world seeking gold.

But we now know his access to children and young woman and his abuse did not end until an investigative news report and one brave woman came public to stop him.

### HIS ACTS:

The basic facts of his assaults have been recounted by the charged victims in this case, as well as the numerous victims who gave their impact statements. The facts that the defendant admitted to Your Honor under oath. That he penetrated these young girls' vaginas and anuses, with his bare hands, not for any medical purpose but for his own sexual purpose. He had erections as he performed these so-called "treatments." He asked 11 year olds to tell them if they were on their periods so he could be sure that they were ripe for his rape. Children that were prepubescent, often unaware of their bodies. Children whose parents sat feet away. Children.

But the assaults he perpetrated on these trusting young girls was not limited to the hours and hours and hours of sexual penetration. Defendant is a twisted, beloved, renowned doctor, who used his prestige to gain trust of these girls, and to exploit

them, leaving many of the emotionally shattered, *used* by a man they not only trusted but *loved*.

He supposedly practiced osteopathic manipulative medicine, but in truth, he was simply a master manipulator. He manipulated victims and parents. He manipulated his community through the press and social media early in this case. He tried to manipulate police in interviews, tried to manipulate prior investigators—even this court through his pathetic letter. All while knowing the truth—that he did the things he was accused of doing.

And in competitive gymnastics, he found the perfect place for this master manipulation. In gymnastics: do what you're told, hide your pain, hide your injuries. These young girls bared all of it; their bodies constantly on display and under scrutiny.

It takes some kind of sick perversion to not only assault a child but to do so with her parent in the room. To do so when a lineup of eager young gymnasts waits at Twistars to see the great Larry Nassar. It's a sick perversion when defendant's close friends were upstairs while he abused young Kyle, just six years old. His OWN wife and kids sat upstairs for *years* while he gave his basement "treatments."

To unnecessarily and without warning penetrate an unsuspecting minor for your own selfish sexual gains while her parents sat just feet away, unknowing, had to be part of the rush or thrill for him. That he could get caught. But he was a master—he developed a built-in defense. No coach should be in a shower with a boy, no priest has an excuse for any type of sexual touching, but Nassar perfected a built-in excuse and defense—he was a doctor, and a damn good one, so the world thought.

And this makes up the other half of his scheme: the *trust* he could garner from being not only a doctor—a respected profession—but an Olympic doctor, one who treated these young victims' heroes. He adorned his office with pictures of Olympians he treated, with the far-off places his supposed expertise took him. He brought back tokens for his precious victims, regalia from competitions across the

world. And in doing so he made each victim feel special. As Kassie Powell said, defendant hid behind Olympic rings and Spartan green and white.

For many of these girls, Nassar was not just a doctor, but a confidant, a role model, sometimes the only affirming male influence in their lives.

The level of Nassar's predation reaches even higher because he often knew the victims' parents, some of whom were fellow doctors, others who unwittingly sent patients to him, he knew parents that were police officers. He was so well-practiced in his abuse and continually empowered himself – he believed he'd get away with it despite any parent's profession. He believed he was untouchable.

Defendant not only robbed these children of their innocence, but he robbed many of good health. No healing, only hurt, with so many heartbreaking stories of unnecessary treatments, misdiagnosis, inaccurate medical treatment which resulted in lasting, permanent damage. Many of these survivors wonder whether their now lifelong injuries could have been treated had Nassar not wanted continued access to their young bodies. He wasn't a world-renowned doctor. As one of our experts so eloquently put it in preparing for this case, he was performing hocus pocus medicine.

### **HIS AVOIDANCE**

Over the last 16 months I have often wondered: Did he really think he was going to get away with this? Abusing so many, for so many years, over two decades, so many sports, no patient, no child was safe and yet, he also abused so many prominent Gymnasts? Maybe he did think he could beat the odds. And for years, he did.

What that did...to Kyle Stephens, to Jessica Thomashow, to Madeleine Jones, to Kaylee Lorinz, to Victims D and G, to Rachael Denhollander.

History gave him guidance for the future—every previous time there had been an allegation, nothing happened. His lies worked. This Court heard from several

women, some decades later, who were initially determined to be confused, or to be liars. He was believed over children—Larissa Boyce, Tiffany Thomas, Brianne Randall, Amanda Thomashow and almost 20 years ago. You saw and heard first hand... To know your truth, to be called a liar by not only your abuser but to also not be believed by other trusting adults? Adults who were supposed to protect you and who could make it stop and prevent others from the same fate...what does that do to a child? We saw first-hand what that does. And with each time he got away, he was empowered to continue and perfect and abuse even more.

IT SHOULD NOT TAKE FINDING a collection of 37,000 vile and disgusting images to believe these women and girls. It shouldn't take investigative journalists to expose predators... it shouldn't take one brave woman making the unenviable choice to go public with her name and be the only public person for months...but thank god we have these journalists and they exposed this story and continued to cover it....thank god Rachael made that first contact with a reporter and decided to allow them to publish her name...how many times have we heard that without those stories and Rachael, victims would not have reported and be here to speak this week and expose what truly happened all those years behind those doors, and under that towel.

**LESSONS LEARNED:**We have all learned a few lessons from this case and these past 7 days of powerful testimony: An entire semester of a college class in sexual abuse, grooming behaviors, why victims delay disclosure, and predatory behavior has played out these past week and a half.

But as we look back on the case and the last 7 days, I'm struck by many observations:

What does it say about our society that victims of sexual abuse have to hide their pain for years when they did NOTHING wrong?

What does it say about our society when victims come forward and they are automatically met by skepticism and doubt, treated as liars until proven true?hat

do we take away from this? These have been important narratives to hear and witness and listen to...they will be the words that burn down cultural stereotypes and cultural myths...

I have a few takeaways and lessons I hope we have learned:

**1. START BY BELIEVING:** Other adults must start by believing when children and young people report abuse regardless of who the perpetrator is, no matter his education, position, the respect he commands, or the awards and adoration he has received. Research shows that the incidents of false allegations are slim, that most perpetrators are serial offenders, and that how a victim, especially a child, is treated when they disclose, if they are believed, supported and not blamed, can affect their well-being for years, and can support better outcomes in the criminal justice system.

**Yet.** Even after that first day and week, it was brought to my attention by many involved in this case that there are still people in this community and elsewhere who are saying these women were all in it for the money or attention.... are you kidding me? After 150+ heart wrenching, raw, graphic, visceral impact statements, how can anyone still believe that?

Even to this day...even as this historic sentencing hearing is broadcast across the globe, there are still likely people who doubt... Those 2000+ School board voters and petition writers, who included doctors and trainers and athletes and lawyers who came to his defense over 16 months ago...I hope they have learned their lesson now.

**2. Anyone can be a perpetrator-serial sexual abuser**

Nassar stole, cheated and lied

He stole their innocence, lied about his behavior, and cheated parents and the community and the world of the trust they held in doctors, prominent physicians, and prominent community members. Experts teach on these issues. Russell Strand, a retired Army criminal investigator, teaches on offender dynamics and

behavior...Strand talks about how abusers have three personas, first is the public one for all to see. Second, the uninhabited persona, what you only let those close to you see, third is the hidden and secret persona: it's hidden in the mind, eyes, and beliefs of the perpetrator and that persona is hidden so well.

Perpetrators hide among us...

Nassar had a public persona-good guy, Olympic doctor, medical school professor, gymnastics god, religious and pious man, father, husband, friend, school board candidate....a man of honor and passion....so kind, and giving and always approachable and never charged for services and saw patients anywhere.

Nassar's third, hidden persona: Possibly the most prolific serial child sex abuser in history, a selfish child molester who sparred no one.

Nassar hid away behind an outer facade that is different and fake and not real but that people believed is the real thing. People came to his defense. They believe he was the man they saw, not the monster hiding beneath.

As a society, our response CAN'T be that HE COULDN'T DO THIS, or that I KNEW HIS CHARACTER AND KNEW HE WASN'T CAPABLE OF THIS KIND OF CRIME! It's because no one wants to see it. The only person who sees this side...*his victims*. Then the perpetrator goes back and shows only what the world sees. This is how he got away with this for so long and got people to believe him over the many many victims who reported.

Anyone can be an abuser. Anyone.

**3. Delayed disclosure isn't unique...**in fact it's the norm. Kids don't report sexual abuse right away, especially when the abuser is a trusted adult, especially when it's a doctor, especially when they have no sexual experience to understand it is wrong,

**4. Predators groom their victims and families...**This is so confusing to many of these women and girls, so nice, presents, desserts, especially contrasting his behavior and relationship to their harsh, cruel and abusive coaches. He was doing that to gain their trust, confuse them and get what he wanted.

**5. We must teach our girls and boys to speak up:** kids are respectful of adults, girls and boys don't speak up, (it is easier to put up with discomfort than to cause waves)...and when we ARE brave...nothing happens. We teach our girls and daughters to be too nice, to just ignore or put up with uncomfortable situations, to stay silent when they should be allowed to be heard. And to continue to speak up until someone listens and helps.

**6. Police and prosecutors** must take on hard cases, regardless of who the offender is. They can't shy away from a tough case because of who the offender is or his position in the community, can't victim blame or wait until you have the perfect case. Can't wait until you have dozens of victims who come forward. They must also start by believing, be victim centered and offender focused in their work.

**7. Need investigative journalists more than ever...**What finally started this reckoning and ended his decades long abuse, was investigative reporting. Without that first Indianapolis Star story in August 2016, without the story where Rachael came forward publicly shortly thereafter, he would still be practicing medicine, treating athletes, abuse kids. **Let that sink in for a minute.** Right now, he would be in his office on Hagadorn and Blvd, not far from this courtroom or the MSU campus, abusing children.

**Federal law enforcement** did not stop him, nor did trainers, or coaches, or Deans, or medical supervisors. Victim disclosures to adults didn't stop him. Reporters began the story and excellent, victim-centered, offender focused police and prosecutors grabbed the baton and brought us here today.

I am proud of the work of the MSU PD and our team at the Attorney General's office. There is no more supportive Police chief in the country than Chief Jim

Dunlap. And our victims and the public are incredibly lucky to have their case investigated by arguably the best sex crimes detective in the country, Andrea Munford, who is not only a smart, dedicated hardworking investigator but is also empathetic and compassionate. Our victims are also lucky to have the full and unwavering support of the Attorney General, Bill Schuette, who from day one supported this prosecution fully.

### **CONTRAST WHERE WE ARE FROM**

We are so proud of these young women for speaking. So many have shared their story and name and face. They should feel no shame because they did nothing wrong. Larry did.

But remember it was one woman who came Public first. Who was ridiculed. Folks rallied around him. Tried to discredit her. Signed petitions in support of him. Believed him because of who he was purported to be.

People continued to support and believe him even after he was charged with Kyle's Case. They chose to believe his lies over the words of a young woman who had NOTHING to gain by coming forward. Nothing.

Some wavered after he was charged with possessing tens of thousands of images of child pornography, still had people in power who had ideas he was framed and it was planted. That is at the same time that these women and countless more we haven't met many who may be watching and reading this **Knew their truth. Knew he had abused them. And they watched him continue to lie about committing that abuse.**

It has not been an easy process for these victims. Especially Rachael, all alone publicly for so many, many months. To be accused of being a pied piper of sorts in the court and the press, to be accused of somehow planting this idea of victimhood in other women's minds. The gripping statements these past two weeks have shown

how absurd those arguments are- you have seen the effects this abuse has had on these women-that's tangible evidence that this happened and that these women were abused, not bandwagon jumpers, not money grabbers...women and girls who were abused.

For victims, to realize years and decades later that they were in fact abused, sometimes hundreds of times when they really thought were receiving legitimate treatments, it shifts their equilibrium, shatters their sense of the world, their sense of safety, their conception of trust. It has caused them to question what they believe and know. And that has lasting consequences.

Unlike any other crimes, sexual abuse and assault so deeply affects and alters victims lives...it seeps and oozes and permeates into every pore and crevice of a victim's life. It can alter their life's trajectory. We've seen that time and time again this past week: depression, anxiety, panic attacks, questioning self-worth, suicidal thoughts, self-medication, self-harm, and even suicide itself.

Nassar sentenced little girl after little girl to lives imprisoned by fear and doubt. The courage it takes to overcome so many little obstacles to try and right your world and just live normal daily life again is immeasurable. They have to overcome these obstacles on a daily basis for the rest of their lives. His sexual abuse turns your world upside down and inside out. But this process of support in this courtroom and in the community helps bring healing.

### **BRING IT BACK TO VICTIMS...**

Your honor, I whole-heartedly want to thank you and your staff for graciously allowing every victim to be heard. What we have witnessed here in your courtroom is unprecedented but hopefully not the last time victims will be heard in this manner. The compassion and empathy you have shown and the support, encouraging words you have given each one coupled with the belief that they and their story matters will be remembered by all long after this case is over.

Over 150 women had courage to walk into this courtroom, most to be publicly identified and outed to the world as a Nassar victim yet, had the grace and courage to speak their truth and to become survivors. Some only publicly disclosing for the first time.

To each survivor, thank you. For coming forward, for trusting us, for doing what was so hard and difficult, especially at the time of reporting and charging and testifying in court. On behalf of the entire team attorney general and msu pd we believe you and always have. We thank you. We are proud to stand up for and with you. You are our heroes.

We have seen the worst of humanity and the best in these last few days. Pain and destructions caused by evil selfish takers but we have also seen how one voice can start a movement, how a reckoning can deliver justice. How a community of support can empower and start healing.

These last 7 days, on our screen you have seen these young innocent faces. That was on purpose. Every day you saw strong, brave, fierce survivors come to the podium...but that's not who Larry saw...he was attracted to and abused those girls in those pictures.

But judge, what you didn't see is all the sweet young innocent faces of girls who have been spared a similar fate because these brave women all spoke up and **never gave up**. No doubt he would have continued to abuse unabated for the rest of his life. Be proud of what you have accomplished. You are survivors.

Nassar's abuse resulted in the creation of an army of survivors. This past weekend, at women's marches around the country, signs with Kyle Stephens' quotes were raised...little girls don't stay little forever. They turn into strong women who have come back to destroy your world.

Jennifer Rood Bedford: Stand for truth, resolve for change, be committed. At this particular moment in history, this sentencing hearing will be viewed as a turning point in how our community, our state, our nation, our culture, looks at sexual

abuse. This courtroom was where the shame that many survivors felt was exorcised from them and put where it belongs. On him. When each survivor came forward and shared their name, told their truth, supported one another, that shift grew. The world has witnessed what happens when victims are treated with respect, dignity, empathy, compassion and truly supported by the police, prosecutors and the courts.

What is obvious is that a strong group of determined women CAN change the world and will...the fact that the women lead the investigation, the prosecution teams, and three female judges now sentence Nassar is poetic justice. As I reflect on the last 7 days of this sentencing hearing, it became clear that each day more women and girls were empowered. These women and girls transformed themselves before our eyes...from victim, to survivor to champions for justice and advocates for change.

And all of this, on the world outside, will carry on. But I want to re-center on the reason we are here—the sentencing of Larry Nassar for his *admitted* conduct against numerous young girls. He sexually assaulted them, he did so under the guise of medical treatment, and he did so for his own sexual purpose. He carried out his plot through a decades-long process he honed and perfected, creating perfect conditions for his predation.

Until these brave women brought it all down.

Sentencing must protect, punish and deter. Through your sentence I ask you to do all three. Judge I ask you to bring these victims the justice they so deserve. We ask you to follow the sentence agreement and sentence the Defendant to 40 years to at least 125 years in prison.